

# Strengthening Efforts to Increase Opportunity and End Poverty

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## Summary:

The President's final Advisory Council for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships submitted its report of recommendations to increase opportunity and end poverty

In 2008, then-Senator Obama spoke about the importance of working with faith and community leaders to tackle our nation's greatest challenges. He promised that his Administration would establish an Advisory Council for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, a body that would “not just be another name on the White House organization chart” but rather “a critical part of [his] Administration.” In February 2009, President Obama established the first-ever council of faith and community leaders to advise the federal government on ways that we can better work together to serve the common good.

Today, the third and final Advisory Council of the Obama Administration submitted its report of recommendations, titled [\*Strengthening Efforts to Increase Opportunity and End Poverty\*](#). The charge for this Council focused on steps the government should take to reduce poverty and inequality and to create opportunity for all.

The report draws on the collective experience and expertise of the diverse members of the Advisory Council. At the outset of the report, the Council outlines its approach to these issues, saying “poverty and inequality are not abstract problems.” Rather, Council members note, “as leaders who are called to serve families in struggling communities, we see poverty in the faces of friends and neighbors – children, grandmothers, uncles, aunts, colleagues and ministry partners.” As they approached the task of making recommendations, “these are the faces [Council members] kept foremost in [their] minds and hearts.”

The report includes recommendations for increasing economic opportunity; addressing race, justice and poverty; and strengthening government approaches and programs for addressing poverty and inequality. The Advisory Council submitted these recommendations on a rolling basis over the past year. The final report compiles those recommendations, some of which the Administration has already implemented. In their report, Council members have tackled some of the toughest challenges facing our country, and we look forward to continuing to be inspired and informed by their work.

The [three Advisory Councils](#) of the Obama Administration have brought together an incredibly diverse group of distinguished leaders, with a total of more than 60 such leaders serving overall. These Councils have captured some of the stunning diversity of our nation. For example, the Council has included leaders from the African Methodist Episcopal, Bahai, Baptist, Buddhist, Catholic, Evangelical, Hindu, Jewish, Mainline Protestant, Mormon, Muslim, Native American, Orthodox Christian, Pentecostal, and Sikh communities. Working together across diverse beliefs and backgrounds, both religious and non-religious, Council members have found common ground and promoted the common good.

“Instead of driving us apart,” President Obama has said, “our varied beliefs can bring us together to feed the hungry and comfort the afflicted; to make peace where there is strife and rebuild what has broken; to lift up those who have fallen on hard times.” The members of the Advisory Councils certainly have fulfilled this charge, and we are deeply grateful for their service.

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